NUMB. XVI.

The SPECTATOR.

Quod verum atque decens curo & rogo, & omnis in hoc ſum.
Hor.

Monday, March 19. 1711.

I Have receiv'd a Letter, deſiring me to be very ſatyrical upon the little Muff that is now in Faſhion; another informs me of a Pair of ſilver Garters buckled below the Knee, that have been lately ſeen at the *Rainbow* Coffee-houſe in *Fleet-ſtreet*; a third ſends me an heavy Complaint againſt fringed Gloves. To be brief, there is ſcarce an Ornament of either Sex which one or other of my Correſpondents has not inveighed againſt with ſome Bitterneſs, and recommended to my Obſervation. I muſt therefore, once for all inform my Readers, that it is not my Intention to ſink the Dignity of this my Paper with Reflections upon Red-heels or Top-knots, but rather to enter into the Paſſions of Mankind, and to correct thoſe depraved Sentiments that give Birth to all thoſe little Extravagancies which appear in their outward Dreſs and Behaviour. Foppiſh and fantaſtick Ornaments are only Indications of Vice, not criminal in themſelves. Extinguiſh Vanity in the Mind, and you naturally retrench the little Superfluities of Garniture and Equipage. The Bloſſoms will fall of themſelves, when the Root that nouriſhes them is deſtroyed.

I ſhall therefore, as I have ſaid, apply my Remedies to the firſt Seeds and Principles of an affected Dreſs, without deſcending to the Dreſs it ſelf; though at the ſame time I muſt own, that I have Thoughts of creating an Officer under me to be entituled *The Cenſor of ſmall Wares*, and of allotting him one Day in a Week for the Execution of ſuch his Office. An Operator of this Nature might act under me with the ſame Regard as a Surgeon to a Phiſitian; the one might be employ'd in healing thoſe Blotches and Tumours which break out in the Body, while the other is ſweetning the Blood and rectifying the Conſtitution. To ſpeak truly, the young People of both Sexes are ſo wonderfully apt to ſhoot out into long Swords or ſweeping Trains, buſhy Head-dreſſes or full-bottom'd Perriwigs, with ſeveral other Incumbrances of Dreſs, that they ſtand in Need of being pruned very frequently that they may not be oppreſſed with Ornaments, and overrun with the Luxuriency of their Habits. I am much in doubt, whether I ſhould give the Preference to a Quaker that is trimmed cloſe and a'moſt cut to the Quick, or to a Beau that is loaden with ſuch a Redundance of Excreſcencies. I muſt therefore deſire my Correſpondents to let me know how they approve my Project, and whether they think the erecting of ſuch a petty Cenſorſhip may not turn to the Emolument of the Publick; for I would not do any thing of this Nature raſhly and without Advice.

There is another Set of Correſpondents to whom I muſt addreſs my ſelf in the ſecond Place; I mean ſuch as fill their Letters with private Scandal, and black Accounts of particular Perſons and Families. The World is ſo full of Ill-nature, that I have Lampoons ſent me by People that cannot ſpell, and Satyrs compos'd by thoſe who ſcarce know how to write. By the laſt Poſt in particular I receiv'd a Packet of Scandal that is not legible; and have a whole Bundle of Letters in Womens Hands that are full of Blots and Calumnies, inſomuch that when I ſee the Name *Cælia*, *Phillis*, *Paſtora*, or the like, at the Bottom of a Scrawl, I conclude on courſe that it brings me ſome Account of a fallen Virgin, a faithleſs Wife, or an amorous Widow. I muſt therefore inform theſe my Correſpondents, that it is not my Deſign to be a Publiſher of Intreagues and Cuckoldoms, or to bring little infamous Stories out of their preſent lurking Holes into broad Day light. If I attack the Vicious, I ſhall only ſet upon them in a Body; and will not be provoked by the worſt Uſage that I can receive from others, to make an Example of any particular Criminal. In ſhort, I have ſo much of a Drawcanſir in me, that I ſhall paſs over a ſingle Foe to charge whole Armies. It is not *Laïs* or *Silenus*, but the Harlot and the Drunkard, whom I ſhall endeavour to expoſe; and ſhall conſider the Crime as it appears in a Species, not as it is circumſtanced in an Individual. I think it was *Caligula* who wiſhed the whole City of *Rome* had but one Neck, that he might behead them at a Blow, I ſhall do out of Humanity what that Emperour would have done in the Cruelty of his Temper, and aim every Stroak at a collective Body of Offenders. At the ſame Time I am very ſenſible, that nothing ſpreads a Paper like private Calumny and Defamation; but as my Speculations are not under this Neceſſity, they are not expoſed to this Temptation.

In

In the next Place I muſt apply my ſelf to my Party-Correſpondents, who are continually teazing me to take Notice of one anothers Proceedings. How often am I asked by both Sides, if it is poſſible for me to be an unconcerned Spectator of the Rogueries that are committed by the Party which is oppoſite to him that writes the Letter. About two Days ſince I was reproached with an old Grecian Law, that forbids any Man to ſtand as a Neuter or a Looker-on in the Diviſions of his Country. However, as I am very ſenſible that my Paper would loſe its whole Effect, ſhould it run into the Outrages of a Party, I ſhall take Care to keep clear of every thing that looks that Way. If I can any way aſſwage private Inflamations, or allay publick Ferments, I ſhall apply my ſelf to it with my utmoſt Endeavours; but will never let my Heart reproach me with having done any thing towards the encreaſing thoſe Feuds and Animoſities that extinguiſh Religion, deface Government, and make a Nation miſerable.

What I have ſaid under the three foregoing Heads, will, I am afraid, very much retrench the Number of my Correſpondents: I ſhall therefore acquaint my Reader, that if he has ſtarted any Hint which he is not able to purſue, if he has met with any ſurprizing Story which he does not know how to tell, if he has diſcovered any epidemical Vice which has eſcaped my Obſervation, or has heard of any uncommon Vertue which he would deſire to publiſh; in ſhort, if he has any Materials that can furniſh out an innocent Diverſion, I ſhall promiſe him my beſt Aſſiſtance in the working of them up for a publick Entertainment.

This Paper my Reader will find was intended for an Anſwer to a Multitude of Correſpondents; but I hope he will pardon me if I ſingle out one of them in particular, who has made me ſo very humble a Requeſt, that I cannot forbear complying with it.

To the SPECTATOR.

SIR, *March* 15, 1710-11.

'I Am at preſent ſo unfortunate, as to have nothing 'to do but to mind my own Buſineſs; and 'therefore beg of you that you will be pleaſed to 'put me into ſome ſmall Poſt under you. I obſerve 'that you have appointed your Printer and Publiſher 'to receive Letters and Advertiſements for the City 'of *London*, and ſhall think my ſelf very much ho-'noured by you, if you will appoint me to take in 'Letters and Advertiſements for the City of *Weſt-'minſter* and the Dutchy of *Lancaſter*. Tho' I 'cannot promiſe to fill ſuch an Employment with 'ſufficient Abilities, I will endeavour to make up with 'Induſtry and Fidelity what I want in Parts and 'Genius. I am,

Sir,

Your moſt obedient Servant,

Charles Lillie.

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